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Mr. Russell on Bull Run;

With a Note; from the

Rebellion Record.

NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM.
1861.

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WM. H. RUSSELL'S LETTER

ON THE BATTLE OF BULL RUN.

WASHINGTON, July 19, 1861.

The army of the North is fairly moving at last, and all the contending voices of lawyers and disputants will speedily be silenced by the noise of the cannon. Let no one suppose that the war will be decided in one or two battles, or conclude from any present successes of the Federalists that they will not meet with stern opposition as they advance. The Confederates uniformly declared to me after their failure to take either Faneuil Hall or the Capitol, they would wait in Virginia and "entice" the Federalists into certain mysterious traps, where they would be "destroyed to a man." There is great reliance placed on "masked batteries" in this war, and the country is favorable to their employment; but nothing can prove more completely the unsteady character of the troops than the reliance which is placed on the effects of such works, and, indeed, there is reason to think that there have been panics on both sides—at Great Bethel as well as at Laurel Hill. The telegraph is faster than the post, and all the lucubrations of to-day may be falsified by the deeds of to-morrow. The Senate and Congress are sitting in the Capitol within the very hearing of the guns, and the sight of the smoke of the conflict which is now raging in Virginia.

Senators and Congressmen are engaged in disputations and speeches, while soldiers are working out the problem in their own way, and it is within the range of possibility that a disastrous battle may place the capital in the hands of the Confederates; and the news which has just come in that the latter have passed Bull Run, a small river which flows into the Potomac, below Alexandria, crossing the railroad from that place, is a proof that Fairfax Court-House was abandoned for a reason. It is stated that the Confederates have been repulsed by the 69th (Irish) Regiment and the 79th (Scotch) New York Volunteers, and as soon as this letter has been posted I shall proceed to the field (for the campaign has now fairly commenced) and ascertain the facts. If the Confederates force the left of McDowell's army, they will obtain possession of the line to Alexandria, and may endanger Washington itself. The design of Beauregard may have been to effect this very object while he engaged the bulk of the Federalists at Manassas Junction, which you must not confound with Manassas Gap. The reports of guns were heard this morning in the direction of the Junction, and it is probable that McDowell, advancing from Centreville, has met the enemy, prepared to dispute his passage.

There are some stories in town to the effect that Gen. Tyler has met with a severe check on the right, but the advance of McDowell was very cautious, and he would not let his troops fall into the ambuscades against which they have been especially forewarned. Let speculation, which to-morrow's news must outstrip, cease here, and let us examine the composition of the forces actually engaged with the Confederates. The head of the naval and military forces of the United States is the President, in theory and in the practice of appointments; but Lieut.-Gen. Winfield Scott is "Commander-in-Chief" of the United States Army. His staff consists of Lieut.-Col. E. D. Townsend, Assistant Adjutant-General, Chief of the Staff; Col. H. Van Renssellaer, A. D. C. (Volunteer;) Lieut.-Col. George W. Cullum, United States Engineer, A. D. C.; Lieut.-Col. Edward Wright, United States Cavalry, A. D. C.; Lieut.-Col. Schuyler Hamilton, Military Secretary.

The subjoined general order gives the organization of the standard of the several divisions of the army under Brig.-Gen. McDowell, now advancing into Virginia from the lines opposite Washington.*

Some changes have been made since this order was published, and the corps has been strengthened by the accession of two regular field-batteries. The effective strength of the infantry, under McDowell, may be taken at 30,000, and there are about sixty field-pieces at his disposal, and a force of about ten squadrons of cavalry.†

The division under Gen. Patterson is about 22,000 strong, and has three batteries of artillery attached to it; and Gen. Mansfield, who commands the army of Washington and the reserve watching the Capitol, has under him a corps of 16,000 men almost exclusively volunteers; Gen. McDowell has also left a strong guard in his intrenchments along the right bank of the Potomac, guarding the bridges and covering the roads to Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church. The division in military occupation of Maryland under Gen. Banks, most of which is concentrated in and around Baltimore, consists of 7,400 men, with some field-guns. The corps at Fortress Monroe and Hampton, under Gen. Butler, is 11,000 strong, with two field batteries, some guns of position, and the fortress itself in hand. Gen. Lyon, who is operating in Missouri with marked success, has about 6,500 men. Gen. Prentiss at Cairo commands a division of 6,000 men and two field-batteries. There are beside these forces many regiments organized and actually in the field. The army under the command of Gen. Beauregard at Manassas Junction is estimated at 60,000, but that must include the reserves, and a portion of the force in the intrenchments along the road to Richmond, in the immediate neighorhood of which there is a corps of 15,000 men. At Norfolk there are 18,000 or 20,000, at Acquia Creek 8,000 to 9,000, and Johnston's corps is estimated at 10,000, swollen by the *débris* of the defeated column.

The railways from the South are open to the Confederates, and they can collect their troops rapidly, so that it is not at all beyond the reach of probability that they can collect 150,000 or 160,000 men in Virginia, if that number is not now actually in the State. In cavalry they have a superiority, but the country is not favorable for their operations till the armies approach Richmond. In field-artillery they are not so well provided as the Federalists. They have, however, a great number of heavy batteries and guns of position at their disposal. Food is plentiful in their camps; the harvest is coming in. In general equipments and ammunition the Federalists have a considerable advantage. In discipline there is not much difference, perhaps, in the bulk of the volunteers on both sides, but the United States forces have the benefit of the example and presence of the regular army, the privates of which have remained faithful to the Government. If we are to judge from what may be seen in Washington, there are *mauvais sujets* in abundance among the United States troops.

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* For this order, see page 1, *ante*.

† Here follows an account of McClellan's Division in Western Virginia.

The various foreign ministers have been so much persecuted by soldiers coming to their houses and asking for help, that sentries were ordered to be put at their doors. Lord Lyons, however, did not acquiesce in the propriety of the step, and in lieu of that means of defence against demands for money, a document called "a safeguard" has been furnished to the domestics at the various legations, in which applicants are informed that they are liable to the penalty of death for making such solicitations. Gen. McDowell writes in his despatch from Fairfax Court-House: "I am distressed to have to report excesses by our troops. The excitement of the men found vent in burning and pillaging, which, however soon checked, distressed us all greatly." What will take place at the close of a hardly contested action in the front of populous towns and villages? The vast majority of the soldiers are very well-behaved, but it will require severe punishment to deter the evil-disposed from indulging in all the license of war.

The energy displayed in furnishing the great army in the field with transport and ambulances is very great, and I have been surprised to see the rapidity with which wagons and excellent field hospitals and sick carts have been constructed and forwarded by the contractors. The corps in Virginia under McDowell may be considered fit to make a campaign in all respects so far as those essentials are concerned, and the Government is rapidly purchasing horses and mules which are not inferior to those used in any army in the world. These few lines must suffice till the despatch of the mail on Wednesday.

July 22.—I sit down to give an account—not of the action yesterday, but of what I saw with my own eyes, hitherto not often deceived, and of what I heard with my own ears, which in this country are not so much to be trusted. Let me, however, express an opinion as to the affair of yesterday. In the first place, the repulse of the Federalists, decided as it was, might have had no serious effects whatever beyond the mere failure—which politically was of greater consequence than it was in a military sense—but for the disgraceful conduct of the troops. The retreat on their lines at Centreville seems to have ended in a cowardly rout—a miserable, causeless panic. Such scandalous behavior on the part of soldiers I should have considered impossible, as with some experience of camps and armies I have never even in alarms among camp-followers seen the like of it. How far the disorganization of the troops extended, I know not; but it was complete in the instance of more than one regiment. Washington this morning is crowded with soldiers without officers, who have fled from Centreville, and with "three months' men," who are going home from the face of the enemy on the expiration of their term of enlistment. The streets, in spite of the rain, are crowded by people with anxious faces, and groups of wavering politicians are assembled at the corners, in the hotel passages, and the bars. If, in the present state of the troops, the Confederates were to make a march across the Potomac above Washington, turning the works at Arlington, the Capitol might fall into their hands. Delay may place that event out of the range of probability.

The North will, no doubt, recover the shock. Hitherto she has only said, "Go and fight for the Union." The South has exclaimed, "Let us fight for our rights." The North must put its best men into the battle, or she will inevitably fail before the energy, the personal hatred, and the superior fighting powers of her antagonist. In my letters, as in my conversation, I have endeavored to show that the task which the Unionists have set themselves is one of no ordinary difficulty; but in the state of arrogance and supercilious confidence, either real or affected to conceal a sense of weakness, one might as well have preached to the pyramid of Cheops. Indeed, one may form some notion of the condition of the public mind by observing that journals conducted avowedly by men of disgraceful personal character—the be-whipped, and be-kicked, and unrecognized pariahs of society in New York—are, nevertheless, in the very midst of repulse and defeat, permitted to indulge in ridiculous rhodomontade toward the nations of Europe, and to move our laughter by impotently malignant attacks on "our rotten old monarchy," while the stones of their bran-new Republic are tumbling about their ears. It will be amusing to observe the change of tone, for we can afford to observe and to be amused at the same time.

On Saturday night I resolved to proceed to Gen. McDowell's army, as it was obvious to me that the repulse at Bull Run and the orders of the General directed against the excesses of his soldiery indicated serious defects in his army—not more serious, however, than I had reason to believe existed. How to get out was the difficulty. The rumors of great disaster and repulse had spread through the city. The livery stable keepers, with one exception, refused to send out horses to the scene of action—at least the exception told me so. Senators and Congressmen were going to make a day of it, and all the vehicles and horses that could be procured were in requisition for the scene of action. This curiosity was aroused by the story that McDowell had been actually ordered to make an attack on Manassas, and that Gen. Scott had given him till 12 o'clock to be master of Beauregard's lines. If Gen. Scott ordered the attack at all, I venture to say he was merely the mouthpiece of the more violent civilians of the Government, who mistake intensity of feeling for military strength. The consequences of the little skirmish at Bull Run, ending in the repulse of the Federalists, were much exaggerated, and their losses were put down at any figures the fancy of the individual item who was speaking suggested. "I can assure you, sir, that the troops had 1,500 killed and wounded; I know it." I went off to the head-quarters, and there Gen. Scott's Aid informed me that Gen. McDowell's official report gave 6 killed and 37 wounded. The livery keepers stuck to the 1,500 or 2,000. The greater the number *hors de combat*, the higher the tariff for the hire of quadrupeds. All I could do was to get a kind of cabriolet, with a seat in front for the driver, to which a pole was affixed for two horses, at a Derby-day price, a strong led horse, which Indian experiences have induced me always to rely upon in the neighborhood of uncertain fighting. I had to enter into an agreement with the owner to pay him for horses and buggy if they were "captured or injured by the enemy," and though I smiled at his precautions, they proved not quite unreasonable. The master made no provision for indemnity in the case of injury to the driver, or the colored boy who rode the saddle-horse. When I spoke with officers at Gen. Scott's head-quarters of the expedition, it struck me they were not at all sanguine about the result of the day, and one of them said as much as induced me to think he would advise me to remain in the city, if he did not take it for granted it was part of my duty to go to the scene of action. An English gentleman who accompanied me was strongly dissuaded from going by a colonel of cavalry on the staff, because, he said, "the troops are green, and no one can tell what may happen." But my friend got his pass from Gen. Scott, who was taking the whole affair of Bull Run and the pressure of the morrow's work with perfect calm, and we started on Sunday morning—not so early as we ought, perhaps, which was none of my fault—for Centreville, distant about 25 miles south-west of Washington. I purposed starting in the beautiful moonlight, so as to arrive at McDowell's camp in the early dawn; but the aides could not or would not give us the countersign over the Long Bridge, and without it no one could get across until after 5 o'clock in the morning. When McDowell moved away, he took so many of the troops about Arlington that the camps and forts are rather denuded of men. I do not give, as may be observed, the names of regiments, unless in special cases—first, because they possess little interest, I conceive, for those in Europe who read these letters; and secondly, because there is an exceedingly complex system—at least to a foreigner—of nomenclature in the forces, and one may make a mistake between a regiment of volunteers and a regiment of State militia of the same number, or even of regulars in the lower figures. The soldiers lounging about the forts and over the Long Bridge across the Potomac were an exceedingly unkempt, "loafing" set of fellows, who handled their firelocks like pitchforks and spades, and I doubt if some of those who read or tried to read our papers could understand them, as they certainly did not speak English. The Americans possess excellent working materials, however, and I have had occasion repeatedly to remark the rapidity and skill with which they construct earthworks. At the Virginia side of the Long Bridge there is now a very strong *tête de pont*, supported by the regular redoubt on the hill over the road. These works did not appear to be strongly held, but it is possible men were in the tents near at hand, deserted though they seemed, and at all events reinforcements could be speedily poured in if necessary.

The long and weary way was varied by different pickets along the road, and by the examination of our papers and passes at different points. But the country looked vacant, in spite of crops of Indian corn, for the houses were shut up, and the few indigenous people whom we met looked most blackly under their brows at the supposed abolitionists. This portion of Virginia is well wooded, and undulating in heavy, regular waves of field and forest; but the roads are deeply cut, and filled with loose stones, very disagreeable to ride or drive over. The houses are of wood, with the usual negro huts adjoining them, and the specimens of the race which I saw were well-dressed, and not ill-looking. On turning into one of the roads which leads to Fairfax Court-House, and to Centreville beyond it, the distant sound of cannon reached us. That must have been about 9½ A. M. It never ceased all day; at least, whenever the rattle of the gig ceased, the booming of cannon rolled through the woods on our ears. One man said it began at 2 o'clock, but the pickets told us it had really become continuous about 7½ or 8 o'clock. In a few minutes afterward, a body of men appeared on the road, with their backs toward Centreville, and their faces toward Alexandria. Their march was so disorderly that I could not have believed they were soldiers in an enemy's country—for Virginia hereabout is certainly so—but for their arms and uniform. It soon appeared that there was no less than an entire regiment marching away, singly or in small knots of two or three, extending for some three or four miles along the road. A Babel of tongues rose from them, and they were all in good spirits, but with an air about them I could not understand. Dismounting at a stream where a group of thirsty men were drinking and halting in the shade, I asked an officer, "Where are your men going, sir?" "Well, we're going home, sir, I reckon, to Pennsylvania." It was the 4th Pennsylvania Regiment, which was on its march, as I learned from the men. "I suppose there is severe work going on behind you, judging from the firing?" "Well, I reckon, sir, there is." "We're going home," he added after a pause, during which it occurred to him, perhaps, that the movement required explanation—"because the men's time is up. We have had three months of this work." I proceeded on my way, ruminating on the feelings of a General who sees half a brigade walk quietly away on the very morning of an action, and on the frame of mind of the men, who would have shouted till they were hoarse about their beloved Union—possibly have hunted down any poor creature who expressed a belief that it was not the very quintessence of every thing great and good in government, and glorious and omnipotent in arms—coolly turning their backs on it when in its utmost peril, because the letter of their engagement bound them no further. Perhaps the 4th Pennsylvania were right, but let us hear no more of the excellence of three months' service volunteers. And so we left them. The road was devious and difficult. There were few persons on their way, for most of the Senators and Congressmen were on before us. Some few commissariat wagons were overtaken at intervals. Wherever there was a house by the roadside, the negroes were listening to the firing. All at once a terrific object appeared in the wood above the trees—the dome of a church or public building, apparently suffering from the shocks of an earthquake, and heaving to and fro in the most violent manner. In much doubt we approached as well as the horses' minds would let us, and discovered that the strange thing was an inflated balloon attached to a car and wagon, which was on its way to enable Gen. McDowell to reconnoitre the position he was then engaged in attacking—just a day too late. The operators and attendants swore as horribly as the warriors in Flanders, but they could not curse down the trees, and so the balloon seems likely to fall into the hands of the Confederates. About 11 o'clock we began to enter on the disputed territory which had just been abandoned by the Secessionists to the Federalists in front of Fairfax Court-House. It is not too much to say, that the works thrown up across the road were shams and make-believes, and that the Confederates never intended to occupy the position at all, but sought to lure on the Federalists to Manassas, where they were prepared to meet them. Had it been otherwise, the earthworks would have been of a different character, and the troops would have had regular camps and tents, instead of bivouac huts and branches of trees. Of course, the troops of the enemy did not wish to be cut off, and so they had cut down trees to place across the road, and put some field-pieces in their earthworks to command it. On no side could Richmond be so well defended. The Confederates had it much at heart to induce their enemy to come to the strongest place and attack them, and they succeeded in doing so. But, if the troops behaved as ill in other places as they did at Manassas, the Federalists could not have been successful in any attack whatever. In order that the preparations at Manassas may be understood, and that Gen. Beauregard, of whose character I gave some hint at Charleston, may be known at home as regards his fitness for his work, above all as an officer of artillery and of skill in working it in field or in position, let me insert a description of the place and of the man from a Southern paper:—

"MANASSAS JUNCTION, VIRGINIA, June 7, 1861.

"This place still continues the head-quarters of the army of the Potomac. There are many indications of an intended forward movement, the better to invite the enemy to an engagement, but the work of fortification still continues. By nature, the position is one of the strongest that could have been found in the whole State. About half-way between the eastern spur of the Blue Ridge and the Potomac, below Alexandria, it commands the whole country between so perfectly, that there is scarcely a possibility of its being turned. The right wing stretches off toward the head-waters of the Occoquan, through a wooded country, which is easily made impassable by the felling of trees. The left is a rolling table-land, easily commanded from the successive elevations, till you reach a country so rough and so rugged that it is a defence to itself. The key to the whole position, in fact, is precisely that point which Gen. Beauregard chose for his centre, and which he has fortified so strongly, that, in the opinion of military men, 5,000 men could there hold 20,000 at bay. The position, in fact, is fortified in part by nature herself. It is a succession of hills, nearly equidistant from each other, in front of which is a ravine so deep and so thickly wooded that it is passable only at two points, and those through gorges which 50 men can defend against a whole army. It was at one of these points that the Washington artillery (of New Orleans) were at first encamped, and though only half the batallion was then there, and we had only one company of infantry to support us, we slept as soundly under the protection of our guns as if we had been in a fort of the amplest dimensions. Of the fortifications superadded here by Gen. Beauregard to those of nature, it is, of course, not proper for me to speak. The general reader in fact, will have a sufficiently precise idea of them by conceiving a line of forts some two miles in extent, zigzag in form, with angles, salients, bastions, casemates, and every thing that properly belongs to works of this kind. The strength and advantages of this position at Manassas are very much increased by the fact that 14 miles further on is a position of similar formation, while the country between is admirably adapted to the subsistence and intrenchment of troops in numbers as large as they can easily be manœuvred on the real battle-field. Water is good and abundant, forage such as is everywhere found in the rich farming districts of Virginia, and the communication with all parts of the country easy. Here, overlooking an extensive plain, watered by mountain streams which ultimately find their way to the Potomac; and divided into verdant fields of wheat, and oats, and corn, pasture and meadow, are the head-quarters of the advanced forces of the army of the Potomac. They are South Carolinians, Louisianians, Alabamians, Mississippians, and Virginians, for the most part; the first two, singular enough, being in front, and that they will keep it, their friends at home may rest assured. Never have I seen a finer body of men—men who were more obedient to discipline, or breathed a more self-sacrificing patriotism. As might be expected from the skill with which he has chosen his position, and the system with which he encamps and moves his men, Gen. Beauregard is very popular here. I doubt if Napoleon himself had more the undivided confidence of his army. By nature, as also from a wise policy, he is very reticent. Not an individual here knows his plans or a single move of a regiment before it is made, and then only the colonel and his men know where it goes to. There is not a man here who can give any thing like a satisfactory answer how many men he has, or where his exact lines are. For the distance of 14 miles around, you see tents everywhere, and from them you can make a rough estimate of his men; but how many more are encamped on the by-roads and in the forests, none can tell. The new-comer, from what he sees at first glance, puts down the numbers at about 30,000 men; those who have been here longest estimate his force at 40,000, 50,000, and some even at 60,000 strong. And there is the same discrepancy as to the quantity of his artillery. So close does the general keep his affairs to himself, that his left hand hardly knows what his right hand doeth, and so jealous is he of this prerogative of a commanding officer, that I verily believe, if he suspected his coat of any acquaintance with the plans revolving within him, he would cast it off."

It was noon when we arrived at Fairfax Court-House—a poor village of some 30 or 40 straggling wooden and brick houses, deriving its name from the building in which the Circuit Court of the county is held, I believe, and looking the reverse of flourishing—and one may remark, *obiter*, that the state of this part of Virginia cannot be very prosperous, inasmuch as there was not a village along the road up to this point, and no shops or depots, only one mill, one blacksmith and wheelwright. The village was held by a part of the reserve of McDowell's force, possibly 1,000 strong. The inhabitants were, if eyes spoke truth, secessionists to a man, woman and child, and even the negroes looked extra black, as if they did not care about being fought for. A short way beyond this village, Germantown, the scene of the recent excesses of the Federalists, afforded evidence in its blackened ruins that Gen. McDowell's censure was more than needed. Let me interpolate it, if it be only to show that Gen. Beauregard and his rival are at least equal in point of literary power as masters of the English tongue:

"HEAD-QUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA,
FAIRFAX COURT-HOUSE, July 18.

"GENERAL ORDERS, No. 18.—It is with the deepest mortification the general commanding finds it necessary to reiterate his orders for the preservation of the property of the inhabitants of the district occupied by the troops under his command. Hardly had we arrived at this place, when, to the horror of every right-minded person, several houses were broken open, and others were in flames, by the act of some of those who, it has been the boast of the loyal, came here to protect the oppressed, and free the country from the domination of a hated party. The property of this people is at the mercy of troops who, we rightly say, are the most intelligent, best educated, and most law-abiding of any that ever were under arms. But do not, therefore, the acts of yesterday cast the deepest stain upon them? It was claimed by some that their particular corps were not engaged in these acts. This is of but little moment; since the individuals are not found out, we are all alike disgraced. Commanders of regiments will select a commissioned officer as a provost-marshal, and ten men as a police force under him, whose special and sole duty it shall be to preserve the property from depredations, and to arrest all wrong-doers, of whatever regiment or corps they may be. Any one found committing the slightest depredation, killing pigs or poultry, or trespassing on the property of the inhabitants, will be reported to head-quarters, and the least that will be done to them will be to send them to the Alexandria jail. It is again ordered, that no one shall arrest, or attempt to arrest, any citizen not in arms at the time, or search or attempt to search any house, or even to enter the same without permission. The troops must behave themselves with as much forbearance and propriety as if they were at their own homes. They are here to fight the enemies of the country, not to judge and punish the unarmed and defenceless, however guilty they may be.

When necessary, that will be done by the proper person.

"By command of Gen. McDowell:

"James B. Fry, Assistant Adjutant-General."

The chimney stacks, being of brick, are the sole remains of the few good houses in the village. Here our driver made a mistake, which was the rather persisted in, that a colored chattel informed us we could get to Centreville by the route we were pursuing, instead of turning back to Germantown, as we should have done. Centreville was still seven miles ahead. The guns sounded, however, heavily from the valleys. Rising above the forest tops appeared the blue masses of the Alleghanies, and we knew Manassas was somewhere on an outlying open of the ridges, which reminded me in color and form of the hills around the valley of Baidar. A Virginian who came out of a cottage, and who was assuredly no descendant of Madame Esmond, told us that we were "going wrong right away." There was, he admitted, a byroad somewhere to the left front, but people who had tried its depths had returned to Germantown with the conviction that it led to any place but Centreville. Our driver, however, wished to try "if there were no Seseshers about?" "What did you say?" quoth the Virginian. "I want to know if there are any Secessionists there." "Secessionists!" (in a violent surprise, as if he had heard of them for the first time in his life.) "No, Sir-ee, Secessionists indeed!" And all this time Beauregard and Lee were pounding away on our left front, some six or seven miles off. The horses retraced their steps, the colored youth who bestrode my charger complaining that the mysterious arrangement which condemns his race to slavery was very much abraded by the action of that spirited quadruped, combined, or rather at variance with the callosities of the English saddle. From Germantown, onward by the right road, there was nothing very remarkable. At one place a group of soldiers were buying "Secession money" from some negroes, who looked as if they could afford to part with it as cheaply as men do who are dealing with other people's property. Buggies and wagons (Anglicé, carriages) with cargoes of senators, were overtaken. The store cars became more numerous. At last Centreville appeared in sight—a few houses on our front, beyond which rose a bald hill—the slopes covered with bivouac huts, commissariat carts and horses, and the top crested with spectators of the fight. The road on each side was full of traces of Confederate camps; the houses were now all occupied by Federalists. In the rear of the hill was a strong body of infantry—two regiments of foreigners, mostly Germans, with a battery of light artillery. Our buggy was driven up to the top of the hill. The colored boy was despatched to the village to look for a place to shelter the horses while they were taking a much required feed, and to procure, if possible, a meal for himself and the driver. On the hill there were carriages and vehicles drawn up as if they were attending a small country race. They were afterwards engaged in a race of another kind. In one was a lady with an opera-glass; in and around and on others were legislators and politicians. There were also a few civilians on horseback, and on the slope of the hill a regiment had stacked arms, and was engaged in looking at and commenting on the battle below. The landscape in front was open to the sight as far as the ranges of the Alleghanies, which swept round from the right in blue mounds, the color of which softened into violet in the distance. On the left the view was circumscribed by a wood, which receded along the side of the hill on which we stood to the plain below. Between the base of the hill, which rose about 150 feet above the general level of the country, and the foot of the lowest and nearest elevation of the opposite Alleghanies, extended about five miles, as well as I could judge, of a densely wooded country, dotted at intervals with green fields and patches of cleared lands. It was marked by easy longitudinal undulations, indicated by the form of the forests which clothed them, and between two of the more considerable ran small streams, or "runs," as they are denominated, from the right to the left. Close at hand a narrow road descended the hill, went straight into the forest, where it was visible now and then among the trees in cream-colored patches. This road was filled with commissariat wagons, the white tops of which were visible for two miles in our front.

On our left front a gap in the lowest chain of the hills showed the gap of Manassas, and to the left and nearer to me lay the "Junction" of the same name, where the Alexandria Railway unites with the rail from the west of Virginia, and continues the route by rails of various denominations to Richmond. The scene was so peaceful, a man might well doubt the evidence of one's sense that a great contest was being played out below in bloodshed, or imagine, as Mr. Seward sometimes does, that it was a delusion when he wakes in the morning and finds there is civil war upon him. But the cannon spoke out loudly from the green bushes, and the plains below were mottled, so to speak, by puffs of smoke and by white rings from bursting shells and capricious howitzers. It was no review that was going on beneath us. The shells gave proof enough of that, though the rush of the shot could not be heard at the distance. Clouds of dust came up in regular lines through the tree-tops where infantry were acting, and now and then their wavering mists of light-blue smoke curled up, and the splutter of musketry broke through the booming of the guns. With the glass I could detect, now and then, the flash of arms through the dust-clouds in the open, but no one could tell to which side the troops who were moving belonged, and I could only judge from the smoke whether the guns were fired toward or away from the hill. It was evident that the dust in the distance on our right extended beyond that which rose from the Federalists. The view toward the left, as I have said, was interrupted, but the firing was rather more heavy there than on the front or right flank, and a glade was pointed out in the forest as the beginning of Bull or Poole's Run, on the other side of which the Confederates were hid in force, though they had not made any specific reply to the shells thrown into their cover early in the morning. There seemed to be a continuous line, which was held by the enemy, from which came steady solid firing against what might be supposed to be heads of columns stationed at various points, or advancing against them. It was necessary to feed the horses and give them some rest after a hot drive of some 26 or 27 miles, or I would have proceeded at once to the front. As I was watching the faces of the Senators and Congressmen, I thought I had heard or read of such a scene as this—but there was much more to come. The soldiers, who followed each shot with remarks in English or German, were not as eager as men generally are in watching a fight. Once, as a cloud of thick smoke ascended from the trees, a man shouted out, "That's good; we've taken another battery: there goes the magazine." But it looked like, and I believe was, the explosion of a caisson. In the midst of our little reconnoissance, Mr. Vizetelly, who has been living, and indeed marching, with one of the regiments as artist of *The Illustrated London News*, came up and told us the action had been commenced in splendid style by the Federalists, who had advanced steadily, driving the Confederates before them —a part of the plan, as I firmly believe, to bring them under the range of their guns. He believed the advantages on the Federal side were decided, though won with hard fighting, and he had just come up to Centreville to look after something to eat and drink, and to procure little necessaries, in case of need, for his comrades. His walk very probably saved his life. Having seen all that could be discerned through our glasses, my friend and myself had made a feast on our sandwiches in the shade of the buggy; my horse was eating and resting, and I was forced to give him half an hour or more before I mounted, and meantime tried to make out the plan of battle, but all was obscure and dark. Suddenly up rode an officer, with a crowd of soldiers after him, from the village. "We've whipped them on all points!" he shouted. "We've taken their batteries, and they're all retreating!" Such an uproar as followed! The spectators and men cheered again and again, amid cries of "Bravo!" "Bully for us!" "Didn't I tell you so?" and guttural "hochs" from the Deutschland folk, and loud "hurroors" from the Irish. Soon afterward my horse was brought up to the hill, and my friend and the gentleman I have already mentioned set out to walk toward the front—the latter to rejoin his regiment, if possible, the former to get a closer view of the proceedings. As I turned down into the narrow road or lane already mentioned, there was a forward movement among the large four-wheeled tilt wagons, which raised a good deal of dust. My attention was particularly called to this by the occurrence of a few minutes afterward. I had met my friends on the road, and after a few words, rode forward at a long trot as well as I could past the wagons and through the dust, when suddenly there arose a tumult in front of me at a small bridge across the road, and then I perceived the drivers of a set of wagons with the horses turned toward me, who were endeavoring to force their way against the stream of vehicles setting in the other direction. By the side of the new set of wagons there were a number of commissariat men and soldiers, whom at first sight I took to be the baggage guard. They looked excited and alarmed, and were running by the side of the horses—in front the dust quite obscured the view. At the bridge the currents met in wild disorder. "Turn back! Retreat!" shouted the men from the front. "We're whipped! we're whipped!" They cursed, and tugged at the horses' heads, and struggled with frenzy to get past. Running by me on foot was a man with the shoulder-straps of an officer. "Pray, what is the matter, sir?" "It means we're pretty badly whipped, and that's a fact," he blurted out in puffs, and continued his career. I observed that he carried no sword. The teamsters of the advancing wagons now caught up the cry. "Turn back—turn your horses!" was the shout up the whole line, and, backing, plunging, rearing, and kicking, the horses which had been proceeding down the road, reversed front and went off toward Centreville. Those behind them went madly rushing on, the drivers being quite indifferent whether glory or disgrace led the way, provided they could find it. In the midst of this extraordinary spectacle, an officer, escorted by some dragoons, rode through the ruck with a light cart in charge. Another officer on foot, with his sword under his arm, ran up against me. "What is all this about?" "Why, we're pretty badly whipped. We're all in retreat. There's General Tyler there, badly wounded." And on he ran. There came yet another, who said, "We're beaten on all points. The whole army is in retreat." Still there was no flight of troops, no retreat of an army, no reason for all this precipitation. True, there were many men in uniform flying toward the rear, but it did not appear as if they were beyond the proportions of a large baggage escort. I got my horse up into the field out of the road, and went on rapidly towards the front. Soon I met soldiers, who were coming through the corn, mostly without arms; and presently I saw firelocks, cooking-tins, knapsacks, and greatcoats on the ground, and observed that the confusion and speed of the baggage carts became greater, and that many of them were crowded with men, or were followed by others, who clung to them. The ambulances were crowded with soldiers, but it did not look as if there were many wounded. Negro servants on led horses dashed frantically past; men in uniform, whom it were a disgrace to the profession of arms to call "soldiers," swarmed by on mules, chargers, and even draught horses, which had been cut out of carts or wagons, and went on with harness clinging to their heels, as frightened as their riders. Men literally screamed with rage and fright when their way was blocked up. On I rode, asking all, "What is all this about?" and now and then, but rarely, receiving the answer, "We're whipped;" or, "We're repulsed." Faces black and dusty, tongues out in the heat, eyes staring—it was a most wonderful sight. On they came, like him,

> "Who, having once turned round, goes on,
> And turns no more his head,
> For he knoweth that a fearful fiend
> Doth close behind him tread."

But where was the fiend? I looked in vain. There was, indeed, some cannonading in front of me and in their rear, but still the firing was comparatively distant, and the runaways were far out of range. As I advanced, the number of carts diminished, but the mounted men increased, and the column of fugitives became denser. A few buggies and light wagons filled with men, whose faces would have made up "a great Leporello" in the ghost scene, tried to pierce the rear of the mass of carts, which were now solidified and moving on like a glacier. I crossed a small ditch by the roadside, got out on the road to escape some snake fences, and, looking before me, saw there was still a crowd of men in uniforms coming along. The road was strewn with articles of clothing—firelocks, waist-belts, cartouch-boxes, caps, greatcoats, mess-tins, musical instruments, cartridges, bayonets and sheaths, swords and pistols—even biscuits, water-bottles, and pieces of meat. Passing a white house by the roadside, I saw, for the first time, a body of infantry with sloped arms marching regularly and rapidly towards me. Their faces were not blackened by powder, and it was evident they had not been engaged. In reply to a question, a non-commissioned officer told me in broken English, "We fell back to our lines. The attack did not quite succeed." This was assuring to one who had come through such a scene as I had been witnessing. I had ridden, I suppose, about three or three-and-a-half miles from the hill, though it is not possible to be sure of the distance; when, having passed the white house, I came out on an open piece of ground, beyond and circling which was forest. Two field-pieces were unlimbered and guarding the road; the panting and jaded horses in the rear looked as though they had been hard worked, and the gunners and drivers looked worn and dejected. Dropping shots sounded close in front through the woods; but the guns on the left no longer maintained their fire. I was just about to ask one of the men for a light, when a sputtering fire on my right attracted my attention, and out of the forest or along the road rushed a number of men. The gunners seized the trail of the nearest piece to wheel it round upon them; others made for the tumbrils and horses as if to fly, when a shout was raised, "Don't fire; they're our own men;" and in a few minutes on came pell-mell a whole regiment in disorder. I rode across one, and stopped him. "We're pursued by cavalry," he gasped, "they've cut us all to pieces." As he spoke, a shell burst over the column; another dropped on the road, and out streamed another column of men, keeping together with their arms, and closing up the stragglers of the first regiment. I turned, and to my surprise saw the artillerymen had gone off, leaving one gun standing by itself. They had retreated with their horses. While we were on the hill, I had observed and pointed out to my companions a cloud of dust which rose through the trees on our right front. In my present position that place must have been on the right rear, and it occurred to me that after all there really might be a body of cavalry in that direction; but Murat himself would not have charged these wagons in that deep, well-fenced lane. If the dust came, as I believe it did, from field-artillery, that would be a different matter. Any way it was now well established that the retreat had really commenced, though I saw but few wounded men, and the regiments which were falling back had not suffered much loss. No one seemed to know any thing for certain. Even the cavalry charge was a rumor. Several officers said they had carried guns and lines, but then they drifted into the nonsense which one reads and hears everywhere about "masked batteries." One or two talked more sensibly about the strong positions of the enemy, the fatigue of their men, the want of a reserve, severe losses, and the bad conduct of certain regiments. Not one spoke as if he thought of retiring beyond Centreville. The clouds of dust rising above the woods marked the retreat of the whole army, and the crowds of fugitives continued to steal away along the road. The sun was declining, and some thirty miles yet remained to be accomplished ere I could hope to gain the shelter of Washington. No one knew whither any corps or regiment was marching, but there were rumors of all kinds—"The 69th are cut to pieces," "The Fire Zouaves are destroyed," and so on. Presently a tremor ran through the men by whom I was riding, as the sharp reports of some field-pieces rattled through the wood close at hand. A sort of subdued roar, like the voice of distant breakers, rose in front of us, and the soldiers, who were, I think, Germans, broke into a double, looking now and then over their shoulders. There was no choice for me but to resign any further researches. The mail from Washington for the Wednesday steamer at Boston leaves at 2½ on Monday, and so I put my horse into a trot, keeping in the fields alongside the roads as much as I could, to avoid the fugitives, till I came once more on the rear of the baggage and store carts, and the pressure of the crowd, who, conscious of the aid which the vehicles would afford them against a cavalry charge, and fearful, nevertheless, of their proximity, clamored and shouted like madmen as they ran. The road was now literally covered with baggage. It seemed to me as if the men inside were throwing the things out purposely. "Stop," cried I to the driver of one of the carts, "every thing is falling out." "—— you," shouted a fellow inside, "if you stop him, I'll blow your brains out." My attempts to save Uncle Sam's property were then and there discontinued.

On approaching Centreville, a body of German infantry of the reserve came marching down, and stemmed the current in some degree; they were followed by a brigade of guns and another battalion of fresh troops. I turned up on the hill half a mile beyond. The vehicles had all left but two—my buggy was gone. A battery of field-guns was in position where we had been standing. The men looked well. As yet there was nothing to indicate more than a retreat, and some ill-behavior among the wagoners and the riff-raff of different regiments. Centreville was not a bad position properly occupied, and I saw no reason why it should not be held if it was meant to renew the attack, nor any reason why the attack should not be renewed, if there had been any why it should have been made. I swept the field once more. The clouds of dust were denser and nearer. That was all. There was no firing—no musketry. I turned my horse's head and rode away through the village, and after I got out upon the road the same confusion seemed to prevail. Suddenly the guns on the hill opened, and at the same time came the thuds of artillery from the wood on the right rear. The stampede then became general. What occurred at the hill I cannot say, but all the road from Centreville for miles presented such a sight as can only be witnessed in the track of the runaways of an utterly demoralized army. Drivers flogged, lashed, spurred, and beat their horses, or leaped down and abandoned their teams, and ran by the side of the road; mounted men, servants, and men in uniform, vehicles of all sorts, commissariat wagons, thronged the narrow ways. At every shot a convulsion, as it were, seized upon the morbid mass of bones, sinew, wood, and iron, and thrilled through it, giving new energy and action to its desperate efforts to get free from itself. Again the cry of "Cavalry" arose. "What are you afraid of?" said I to a man who was running beside me. "I'm not afraid of you!" replied the ruffian, levelling his piece at me, and pulling the trigger. It was not loaded, or the cap was not on, for the gun did not go off. I was unarmed, and I did go off as fast I could, resolved to keep my own counsel for the second time that day. And so the flight went on. At one time a whole mass of infantry, with fixed bayonets, ran down the bank of the road, and some falling as they ran, must have killed and wounded those among whom they fell. As I knew the road would soon become impassable or blocked up, I put my horse to a gallop and passed on toward the front. But mounted men still rode faster, shouting out, "Cavalry are coming." Again I ventured to speak to some officers whom I overtook, and said, "If these runaways are not stopped, the whole of the posts and pickets in Washington will fly also!" One of them, without saying a word, spurred his horse and dashed on in front. I do not know whether he ordered the movement or not, but the van of the fugitives was now suddenly checked, and, pressing on through the wood at the roadside, I saw a regiment of infantry blocking up the way, with their front towards Centreville. A musket was levelled at my head as I pushed to the front—"Stop, or I'll fire."* At the same time the officers were shouting out, "Don't let a soul pass." I addressed one of them, and said, "Sir, I am a British subject. I am not, I assure you, running away. I have done my best to stop this disgraceful rout, (as I had,) and have been telling them there are no cavalry within miles of them." "I can't let you pass, sir." I bethought me of Gen. Scott's pass. The adjutant read it, and the word was given along the line, "Let that man pass!" and so I rode through, uncertain if I could now gain the Long Bridge in time to pass over without the countersign. It was about this time I met a cart by the roadside surrounded by a group of soldiers, some of whom had "69" on their caps. The owner, as I took him to be, was in great distress, and cried out as I passed, "Can you tell me, sir, where the 69th are? These men say they are cut to pieces." "I can't tell you." "I'm in charge of the mails, sir, and I will deliver them if I die for it. You are a gentleman and I can depend on your word. Is it safe for me to go on?" Not knowing the extent of the *débâcle*, I assured him it was, and asked the men of the regiment how they happened to be there. "Shure, the Colonel himself told us to go off every man on his own hook, and to fly for our lives!" replied one of them. The mail agent, who told me he was an Englishman, started the cart again. I sincerely hope no bad result to himself or his charge followed my advice; I reached Fairfax Court-House; the people, black and white, with anxious faces, were at the doors, and the infantry were under arms. I was besieged with questions, though hundreds of fugitives had passed through before me. At one house I stopped to ask for water for my horse; the owner sent his servant for it cheerfully, the very house where we had in vain asked for something to eat in the forenoon.

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* As a commentary on the picture here presented, we quote part of an article in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* from an eye-witness of this part of the retreat, who met Mr. Russell at the *very head of the stampede.—Editor.*

We pushed on toward the field. Vehicles still passed moderately, but their occupants appeared unconscious of disaster or of haste. The first indication of disturbed nerves met us in the shape of a soldier, musketless and coatless, clinging to the bare back of a great bony, wagon-horse—*sans* reins, *sans* every thing. Man and beast came panting along, each looking exhausted, and just as they pass us, the horse tumbles down helpless in the road, and his rider tumbles off and hobbles away, leaving the horse to his own care and his own reflections. Still we pushed on.

[Several visitors from the field, up to this time, had reported a complete victory of the Union troops.]

About half-past four, possibly nearer five, Centreville was still (as it proved) a mile or so ahead of us. We reached the top of a moderate rise in the road, and as we plodded on down its slope, I turned a glance back along the road we had *passed;* a thousand bayonets were gleaming in the sunlight, and a full fresh regiment were overtaking us in double-quick step, having come up (as I soon after learned) from Vienna. They reached the top of the hill just as we began to pick our way across the brook which flooded the road in the little valley below. At this moment, looking up the ascent ahead of us, toward the battle, we saw army wagons, private vehicles, and some six or eight soldiers on horseback, rushing down the hill in front of us in exciting confusion, and a thick cloud of dust. The equestrian soldiers, it could be seen at a glance, were only impromptu horsemen, and their steeds were all unused to this melting mode, most of them being bare-backed. Their riders appeared to be in haste, for some reason best known to themselves. Among them, and rather leading the van, was a solitary horseman of different aspect: figure somewhat stout, face round and broad, gentlemanly in aspect, but somewhat flushed and impatient, not to say anxious, in expression. Under a broad-brimmed hat a silk handkerchief screened his neck like a Havelock. He rode a fine horse, still in good condition, and his motto seemed to be "onward"—whether in personal alarm or not, it would be impertinent to say. His identity was apparent at a glance. As his horse reached the spot where we "five" stood together, thus suddenly headed off by the stampede, the regiment behind us had reached the foot of the hill, and the colonel, a large and resolute-looking man, had dashed his horse ahead of his men, until he was face to face with the stampeders.

"What are you doing here?" shouted the colonel in a tone that "meant something." "Halt!" (to his men.) "Form across the road. Stop every one of them!" Then turning to the white-faced soldiers from the field, and brandishing his sword, "Back! back! the whole of ye! Back!

I say," and their horses in an instant are making a reverse movement up the hill, while the army wagons stand in *statu quo:* the thousand muskets of the regiment, in obedience rather to the *action* than to the *word* of the colonel, being all pointed at the group in front, in the midst of which we stand. All this and much more passed in much less time than it takes to tell it.

"But, sir, if you will look at this paper," thus spake our distinguished visitor in the advance to the determined and now excited colonel, "you will see that I am a civilian, a spectator merely, and that this is a special pass," (here I half-imagined a doubt of the character of the regiment flashed in for a second,) "a pass from General Scott."

The manner and the tone indicated that the speaker and his errand were entitled to attention.

"Pass this man up," shouted the colonel somewhat bluntly and impatient of delay; and on galloped the representative of the *Thunderer* toward Washington.

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Now, the art of bragging and the habit of exaggeration are vices to which all we Americans are but too much addicted. But if I say that my friend T—— and myself stood in the midst of this *mêlée* much more impressed with its ludicrous picturesqueness than with any idea of personal danger, my friend at least would agree that this was the simple truth. The brief parley of "Our Own Correspondent" suggested merely the thought that it was a pity such a stranger should be annoyed by such a crowd; I'd better say: "Colonel, this is Mr. Russell of the London *Times;* pray don't detain him." However, this all passed in a twinkling. Our two soldier-friends and the surgeon had pushed on between the wagons toward the field; the distant firing had ceased; the wagons quietly stood still; so T—— and I passed up through the regiment, which they told us was the First or Second New Jersey, Col. Montgomery, from the camp at Vienna; and we sat down comfortably near a house at the top of the hill and waited to see "what next?" *In less than twenty minutes the road was cleared and regulated; the army wagons halted, still in line, on one side of the road;* the civilians were permitted to drive on as fast as they pleased toward Washington; the regiment deployed into a field on the opposite hill, and formed in line of battle commanding the road; a detachment was sent on to "clear the track" toward Centreville; and presently the regiment itself *marched up the road in the direction of the field of conflict.* It was now about half-past *five.*

If we two were not "cowards on instinct," we might still be indifferent to danger through mere ignorance. This is intended to be a simple and truthful narrative *only* of what *we* saw and did, not a philosophical analysis or an imaginative dissertation. The character, cause, extent, and duration of that strange panic have already become an historical problem. Therefore, I specially aim to avoid all inferences, guesses, and generalities, and to state with entire simplicity just what was done and said where we were. Of what passed on the battle-field, or anywhere else, *this* witness cannot testify: he can only tell, with reasonable accuracy, what passed before his eyes, or repeat what he heard directly from those who had just come singly from the fight or the panic; *so much* will go for what it is worth, and no more. The separate sketches from *all* the different points of view are needed for a complete picture, or for a conclusive answer to the question: "Did all our army run away?"

For us, two individuals who had not seen the battle or the first of the panic, but only this tail-end of it, no discussion of the matter at the moment was thought of. We didn't ask each other, or anybody else, whether it was safe to stay there, or to go near the main army. But if the question had been asked, our reply, merely echoing our thoughts at the moment, would have been thus:—

"We have lost the day; our army, or a part of it, after a sturdy fight of nine hours against the great odds of a superior force, strongly intrenched behind masked batteries, and after an actual victory, have fallen back at the last moment, and a part of one wing, with the wagons and outsiders, have started from the field in a sudden and unaccountable panic. But so long as we still have forty thousand men between us and the enemy, more than half of them fresh, in reserve, at Centreville; so long as this, the only main road Potomac-wise from the field, is now quiet and clear, and 'order reigns' at Centreville, where our main body will rest; what is the use of being in a hurry? Let us rest awhile here, and then take our time and go on either South or North, as the appearance of things may warrant." Briefly and distinctly, no worse view of the matter was indicated by any thing we saw or heard while *waiting* TWO HOURS *in that very spot in the road where the panic was first stopped,* [and two hours after Mr. Russell had galloped on to write the *worst* account of the disorder.]

The writer of the above slept at Fairfax Court-House long after Mr. Russell was safe in Washington. As late as 11 P. M., the straggling soldiers from the field were stopped and turned back by platoons of the reserve at Fairfax; and this was done as late as 7 A. M. at Alexandria. In corroboration of the fact that all alarm and disorder had been checked immediately after Mr. Russell's hasty retreat, we quote the following from Mr. H. H. Tilley, of Bristol, R. I., dated at Washington, July 24.

"Our two companions, Burnham and Young, after pushing ahead a little way on the track, repented of their temerity, and retraced their steps, as we did, to the station, and then took the road, also, to Fairfax Court-House; but on reaching the road leading to Centreville, they turned into that, and by thus cutting off the angle that we made, they were enabled to pass through that place, and even get quite near to the battle-field—full as near, in fact, as I think we should have cared to, for Burnham says that after they attacked the hospital, and the retreat commenced, they heard a cannon-ball whistle over their heads, which, I infer, contributed in a slight degree to an acceleration of their movements. They say they were at the place in the road when Colonel Montgomery (as I see it was by the papers) made that famous 'halt!' of the light brigade, (Russell and Company,) soon after it occurred, *and they stopped there, procuring tea and a lodging at a house near by.* They started on their return tramp at about *twelve,* [eight hours after Mr. Russell's retreat,] and must have been only a little way behind us, all the way—reaching here in less than an hour after we did."

"There's a fright among them," I observed, in reply to his question respecting the commissariat drivers. "They're afraid of the enemy's cavalry." "Are you an American?" said the man. "No, I am not." "Well, then," he said, "there will be cavalry on them soon enough. There's 20,000 of the best horsemen in the world in Virginia!" Washington was still 18 miles away. The road was rough and uncertain, and again my poor steed was under way, but it was of no use trying to outstrip the runaways. Once or twice I imagined I heard guns in the rear, but I could not be sure of it in consequence of the roar of the flight behind me. It was most surprising to see how far the foot soldiers had contrived to get on in advance. After sunset the moon rose, and amid other acquaintances, I jogged alongside an officer who was in charge of Col. Hunter, the commander of a brigade, I believe, who was shot through the neck, and was inside a cart, escorted by a few troopers. This officer was, as I understood, the major or second in command of Col. Hunter's regiment, yet he had considered it right to take charge of his chief, and to leave his battalion. He said they had driven back the enemy with ease, but had not been supported, and blamed—as bad officers and good ones will do—the conduct of the General: "So mean a fight I never saw." I was reminded of a Crimean General, who made us all merry by saying, after the first bombardment, "In the whole course of my experience I never saw a siege conducted on such principles as these." Our friend had been without food, but not, I suspect, without drink—and that, we know, affects empty stomachs very much—since two o'clock that morning. Now, what is to be thought of an officer—gallant, he may be, as steel—who says, as I heard this gentleman say to a picket who asked him how the day went in front, "Well, we've been licked into a cocked hat; knocked to ——." This was his cry to teamsters escorts, convoys, the officers and men on guard and detachment, while I, ignorant of the disaster behind, tried to mollify the effect of the news by adding, "Oh! it's a drawn battle. The troops are reoccupying the position from which they started in the morning." Perhaps he knew his troops better than I did. It was a strange ride, through a country now still as death, the white road shining like a river in the moonlight, the trees black as ebony in the shade; now and then a figure flitting by into the forest or across the road—frightened friend or lurking foe, who could say? Then the anxious pickets and sentries all asking, "What's the news?" and evidently prepared for any amount of loss. Twice or thrice we lost our way, or our certainty about it, and shouted at isolated houses, and received no reply, except from angry watch-dogs. Then we were set right as we approached Washington, by teamsters. For an hour, however, we seemed to be travelling along a road which, in all its points, far and near, was "twelve miles from the Long Bridge." Up hills, down into valleys, with the silent grim woods forever by our sides. Now and then, in the profound gloom, broken only by a spark from the horse's hoof, came a dull but familiar sound like the shutting of a distant door. As I approached Washington, having left the Colonel and his escort at some seven miles on the south side of the Long Bridge, I found the grand guards, pickets' posts, and individual sentries burning for news, and the word used to pass along, "What does that man say, Jack?" "Begorra, he tells me we're not bet at all—only retraiting to the ould lines for convaniency of fighting to-morrow again. Oh, that's illigant!" On getting to the *tête de pont*, however, the countersign was demanded; of course, I had not got it. But the officer passed me through on the production of Gen. Scott's safeguard. The lights of the city were in sight; and reflected by the waters of the Potomac, just glistened by the clouded moon, shone the gay lamps of the White House, where the President was probably entertaining some friends. In silence I passed over the Long Bridge. Some few hours later it quivered under the steps of a rabble of unarmed men. At the Washington end a regiment with piled arms were waiting to cross over into Virginia, singing and cheering. Before the morning they received orders, I believe, to assist in keeping Maryland quiet. For the hundredth time I repeated the cautious account, which to the best of my knowledge was true. There were men, women, and soldiers to hear it. The clocks had just struck 11 P. M. as I passed Willard's. The pavement in front of the hall was crowded. The rumors of defeat had come in, but few of the many who had been fed upon lies and the reports of complete victory which prevailed could credit the intelligence. Seven hours had not elapsed before the streets told the story. The "Grand Army of the North," as it was called, had representatives in every thoroughfare, without arms, orders, or officers, standing out in the drenching rain. When all these most unaccountable phenomena were occurring, I was fast asleep, but I could scarce credit my informant in the morning, when he told me that the Federalists, utterly routed, had fallen back upon Arlington to defend the capital, leaving nearly 5 batteries of artillery, 8,000 muskets, immense quantities of stores and baggage, and their wounded prisoners in the hands of the enemy!

Let the American journals tell the story their own way. I have told mine as I know it. It has rained incessantly and heavily since early morning, and the country is quite unfit for operations; otherwise, if Mr. Davis desired to press his advantage, he might be now very close to Arlington Heights. He has already proved that he has a fair right to be considered the head of a "belligerent *power*." But, though the North may reel under the shock, I cannot think it will make her desist from the struggle, unless it be speedily followed by blows more deadly even than the repulse from Manassas. There is much talk now (of "masked batteries," of course) of outflanking, and cavalry, and such matters. The truth seems to be that the men were overworked, kept out for 12 or 14 hours in the sun, exposed to a long-range fire, badly officered, and of deficient regimental organization. Then came a most difficult operation—to withdraw this army, so constituted, out of action, in face of an energetic enemy who had repulsed it. The retirement of the baggage, which was without adequate guards, and was in the hands of ignorant drivers, was misunderstood, and created alarm, and that alarm became a panic, which became frantic on the appearance of the enemy and on the opening of their guns on the runaways. But the North will be all the more eager to retrieve this disaster, although it may divert her from the scheme, which has been suggested to her, of punishing England a little while longer. The exultation of the South can only be understood by those who may see it; and if the Federal Government perseveres in its design to make Union by force, it may prepare for a struggle the result of which will leave the Union very little to fight for. More of the "battle" in my next. I pity the public across the water, but they must be the victims of hallucinations and myths it is out of my power to dispel or rectify just now. Having told so long a story, I can scarcely expect your readers to have patience, and go back upon the usual diary of events; but the records, such as they are, of this extraordinary repulse, must command attention. It is impossible to exaggerate their importance. No man can predict the results or pretend to guess at them.

PASSAGES OF MR. RUSSELL'S LETTER, WITH COMMENTS.

From two witnesses (unknown to each other). The RECORD *Statement was printed ten days before Mr. Russell's was received.*

Mr. Russell.	*Editor of the Chicago Tribune.*	*Publisher of the Rebellion Record.*
"Drivers flogged, lashed, spurred their horses," &c., (near Centreville).	"Jogging leisurely down the Washington road, perhaps 10 minutes—certainly not more—ahead of Mr. Russell, we saw nothing of the flogging, lashing, &c., &c., which he so graphically describes.	"Centreville was still a mile or so ahead of us. * * * a full fresh regiment had overtaken us, and * * * [looking forward] we saw army wagons, private vehicles, and some 6 or 8 soldiers on horseback rushing down, &c. * * * Among them and rather leading the van, was"—Mr. Russell.
"I saw a regiment of infantry blocking up the way with their front towards Centreville. A musket was levelled at my head as I pushed to the front—'Stop, or I'll fire.' At the same time the officers were shouting out, 'don't let a soul pass.' I addressed one of them and said, 'Sir, I am a British subject. I am not, I assure you, running away. I have done my best to stop this disgraceful rout, (as I had,) and have been telling them there are no cavalry within miles of them.' 'I can't let you pass, sir.' I bethought me of Gen. Scott's pass. The adjutant read it, and the word was given along the line, 'Let that man pass,'—so I rode through. * * * * * *	"A mile from Centreville we met that New Jersey regiment, a private of which Mr. Russell says threatened to shoot him if he did not halt. The officers were turning back a few fugitives, not a dozen in all that were on their way in, but recognized as a civilian, as the *Times* correspondent must have been, we passed to the rear unchallenged."	* * * "'Pass this man up" shouted the colonel, and on galloped the representative of the *Thunderer* [*solitary and alone*] toward Washington. No musket was pointed at him any more than at any other in the crowd, and not a syllable was to be heard about his services in 'stopping the disgraceful rout,' although the words actually used were heard distinctly—this witness being within six feet of Mr. R.'s horse. The road was cleared and regulated in 20 minutes."
"I reached Fairfax Court House; the people, black and white, with anxious faces were at the doors, and the infantry were under arms. I was besieged with questions, *though hundreds of fugitives had passed through before me! ! ! !*"	"It is a small matter this, but it marks the accuracy of the man. *Not a question was asked* of Mr. Russell or of us [at this point the two parties were together], not a fugitive we dare affirm had passed that way; the infantry, another N. Jersey regiment, if we are not mistaken [Michigan 4th,—*Ed.*], were at their usual evening parade, supposing, no doubt, that their companions in arms had won a great victory."	[A party of five, viz.: two soldiers, one of whom was Mr. Greene of the — R. I. regiment, a R. I. surgeon, H. H. Tilley of the Navy Department, and G. P. Putnam of N. York, had *walked* from Fairfax Court House to the point above described, the road being quiet, *and not a single soldier* except an officer on horseback having passed towards Washington. Mr. Russell's assertion is wholly unfounded.] [*No soldiers whatever* had *preceded* Mr. Russell, and not more than 300 passed, on the road, up to 9 P. M.] "We reached the pickets near the Court House about *nine* P. M. Here again returning soldiers were still stopped and turned back at this time, and as late, certainly, as ten o'clock, or six hours after the retreat began. Could a couple of platoons turn back a whole army?"
"Once or twice [at Fairfax] I imagined I heard guns in the rear, but I could not be sure of it *in consequence of the roar of the flight behind me! ! ! !* It was most *surprising to see how far the foot soldiers had contrived to get on in advance! ! !*"	"It must have been surprising indeed. From the moment of meeting the 1st N. Jersey regiment [as above], not a soldier, unless one of a baggage or a picket guard, did we see on the road—not one. We faced train after train *going out* with supplies, without guard, and without suspicion that the army was beaten."	[At Fairfax Court House] "Senator Wade seemed to be intending a return to Centreville next morning." * * * This was *about* ELEVEN P. M.; "wagons still at rest; as many soldiers about the place as I had seen at noon—[Michigan 4th in reserve], here and there a poor fellow would come in from battleward inquiring for the hospital."
"I jogged alongside an officer who was in charge of Col. Hunter [wounded], and who 'considered it right to take charge of his chief, and save his battalion.'" "The clocks had just struck 11 P. M. as I passed Willard's. * * * * * * "Let the American journals tell the story in their own way. I have told mine as I know it."	"We saw no troopers and no officer. Hon. Isaac N. Arnold, of the House, was riding by the side of the vehicle, and he, a smooth-faced gentleman in the garb of a civilian, may have been mistaken (by Mr. R.) for 'a doubtful man of war.'"	"We were comfortably dressed [after sleeping at the inn at Fairfax Court House] and in the road between 2 and 3 o'clock [Monday morning]. Our room-mate from the Keystone State we left sound asleep, for we had no authority to disturb him." "Even at this time [half-past 6, Monday morning] only the wagons and wounded men were allowed to pass" [the pickets at Alexandria]. We had walked from near Centreville, slept 3 hours at Fairfax, and on the road *all night* we had not seen 500 soldiers. This is verified by our companion, Mr. H. H. Tilley, of Bristol, R. I.

unless it be speedily followed by blows more deadly even than the repulse from Manassas. There is much talk now (of "masked batteries," of course) of outflanking, and cavalry, and such matters. The truth seems to be that the men were overworked, kept out for 12 or 14 hours in the sun, exposed to a long-range fire, badly officered, and of deficient regimental organization. Then came a most difficult operation—to withdraw this army, so constituted, out of action, in face of an energetic enemy who had repulsed it. The retirement of the baggage, which was without adequate guards, and was in the hands of ignorant drivers, was misunderstood, and created alarm, and that alarm became a panic, which became frantic on the appearance of the enemy and on the opening of their guns on the runaways. But the North will be all the more eager to retrieve this disaster, although it may divert her from the scheme, which has been suggested to her, of punishing England a little while longer. The exultation of the South can only be understood by those who may see it; and if the Federal Government perseveres in its design to make Union by force, it may prepare for a struggle the result of which will leave the Union very little to fight for. More of the "battle" in my next. I pity the public across the water, but they must be the victims of hallucinations and myths it is out of my power to dispel or rectify just now. Having told so long a story, I can scarcely expect your readers to have patience, and go back upon the usual diary of events; but the records, such as they are, of this extraordinary repulse, must command attention. It is impossible to exaggerate their importance. No man can predict the results or pretend to guess at them.

Comments on Mr. Russell's *Letter.*

From the Chicago *Tribune.*

Mr. Russell's letter to the London *Times*, the greater part of which we transferred to our columns yesterday morning, is, in many respects, a remarkable paper. We enjoyed the privilege of riding from a point a couple of miles east of Centreville, to another point east of Fairfax Court House, with Mr. Russell, and when he tells what took place on that bit of road, we are competent judges of his truthfulness and fairness as a descriptive writer. We do not know and do not care what he saw, or says he saw, of the fight and the flight, before we found him; but from the errors and misstatements in that portion of his narrative with which we are immediately concerned, we should be justified in believing that he was not at the battle at all, and that the materials for his letter were gathered from some Fire Zouave or a private of the Ohio Second, who left, terror stricken, in the early part of the fray, and carried the fatal news of the rout and the race to the credulous rear. We left Centreville without knowing that a repulse had been felt, or that a retreat to that point had been ordered. Jogging leisurely down the Washington road, perhaps ten minutes—certainly not more—ahead of Mr. Russell, we saw nothing of the flogging, lashing, spurring, beating, and abandoning that he so graphically describes. The road was as quiet and clear as if no army were in the vicinity. A mile from Centreville we met that New Jersey regiment, a private of which, Mr. Russell says, threatened to "shoot him if he did not halt." The officers were turning back the few fugitives, not a dozen in all, that were on their way in; but, recognized as a civilian, as the *Times* correspondent must have been, we passed to the rear unchallenged. Mr. Russell, at that moment, could not have been half a mile behind us. Pushing on slowly we were overtaken by Col. Hunter's carriage, in which he, wounded, was going to the city. Mr. Russell saw it, or says he saw it, attended by an escort of troopers, at the head of whom was a major, who "considered it right to take charge of his chief and leave his battalion." We saw no troopers nor major. Hon. Isaac N. Arnold, of the House, was riding by the side of the vehicle, and he, a smooth-faced gentleman, in the garb of a civilian, may have been mistaken by our "own correspondent" for a doubtful man of war. Possibly two miles and a half from Centreville, we stopped at a road-side farm house for a cup of water. While drinking, Mr. Russell passed. We recognized him, rode along, and were soon engaged with him in a discussion of the causes of the check—it was not then known to be any thing more; and, in his company, we went on through Fairfax, in all a distance, perhaps, of six or eight miles; and we can affirm that not one incident which he relates as happening in that stretch, had any foundation in fact. We saw nothing of that Englishman of whom he says:

> "It was about this time I met a cart by the road-side, surrounded by a group of soldiers, some of whom had '69' on their caps. The owner, as I took him to be, was in great distress; and cried out, as I passed, 'Can you tell me, sir, where the Sixty-ninth are? These men say they are cut to pieces.' 'I can't tell you.' 'I'm in charge of the mails, sir, and I will deliver them if I die for it. You are a gentleman, and I can depend on your word. Is it safe for me to go on?' Not knowing the extent of the *debacle*, I assured him it was, and

asked the men of the regiment how they happened to be there. 'Shure, the colonel himself told us to go off every man on his own hook, and to fly for our lives,' replied one of them. The mail agent, who told me he was an Englishman, started the cart again. I sincerely hope no bad result to himself or his charge followed my advice."

We rode into Fairfax together.

"I reached Fairfax Court House; the people, black and white, with anxious faces, were at the doors, and the infantry under arms. I was besieged with questions, though hundreds of fugitives had passed through before me."

It is a small matter, this, but it marks the accuracy of the man. Not a question was asked of Mr. Russell nor of us; not a "fugitive," we dare affirm, had passed that way; the infantry—another New Jersey regiment, if we are not mistaken—were at their usual evening parade, supposing, no doubt, that their companions in arms had won a great victory.

"At one house I stopped to ask for water for my horse; the owner sent his servant for it cheerfully, the very house where we had in vain asked for something to eat in the forenoon. 'There's a fright among them,' I observed in reply to his question concerning the commissariat drivers. 'They're afraid of the enemy's cavalry.' 'Are you an American?' said the man. 'No, I am not.' 'Well, then,' he said, 'there will be cavalry on them soon enough. There's twenty thousand of the best horsemen in the world in Virginny.'"

At the little one-horse tavern in Fairfax, the horses—Mr. R.'s and our own—were watered, by a servant; but the reported conversation did not take place. A short distance from that inn, Mr. Russell put spurs to his animal, and, riding furiously, left us behind; he picked up ample material for misrepresentation, however, as he went. We point out the greatest falsehood, if one falsehood can be greater than another, in the columns that he has devoted to the vilification of our troops:

"Washington was still 18 miles away. The road was rough and uncertain, and again my poor steed was under way; but it was no use of trying to outstrip the runaways. Once or twice I imagined I heard guns in the rear, but I could not be sure, in consequence of the roar of the flight behind me. It was most surprising to see how far the foot soldiers had contrived to go on in advance."

It must have been surprising indeed! From the moment of meeting the First New Jersey regiment, of which we have spoken, not a soldier, unless one of a baggage, or a picket-guard, did we see on the road—not one. The wagons *going in* were few, and their progress was not such as to indicate that they were making a retreat. We faced train after train *going out* with supplies, without guard, and without suspicion that the army was beaten and in flight. The defeat was not known to any on the road, not even to Mr. Russell, who informed us that our army would fall back and encamp for the night, only to renew the battle the next day. The "roar of the flight behind me" is a stretch of the imagination. We were "behind me," and heard the guns, and marked the time as 7:15; but save our poor old thick-winded steed, there was not another horse on the road within our sight. A few carriages with wounded, a few retiring civilians—none making haste, none suspecting the *finale* that was reached—soon passed us; but not an armed man, trooper nor footman, was anywhere near. Mr. Russell in the next paragraph confesses as much:

"It was a strange ride, through a country *now still as death*, the white road shining like a river in the moonlight, the trees black as ebony in the shade; now and then a figure flitting by into the forest or across the road—frightened friend or lurking foe, who could say? Then the anxious pickets and sentries all asking, 'What's the news?' and evidently prepared for any amount of loss."

The truth is probably this: The imaginative correspondent left the battle-ground before any confusion occurred, and when the retrograde movement was ordered. Hearing the exaggerated stories of what came to be a flight, after he got into Washington, on Monday, while the excitement was at its height, he wove them into his letter as facts of his own observation. The rout was disgraceful enough to make any man's blood cold in his veins; but it was not what Mr. Russell describes. As we have asserted, he did not see it.

From the Providence *Journal.*

To the Editor of the Journal:

Mr. Russell, who occupies so large a space in the London *Times* in giving a description of "What he saw" at the repulse of "Bull Run," was at no time within three miles of the battle-field, and was at no time within sight or musket-shot of the enemy.

He entered Centreville after the writer of this, and left before him. At the period of the hardest fighting, he was eating his lunch with a brother "John Bull," near Gen. Miles's head-quarters.

When the officer arrived at Centreville, announcing the apparent success of the Federal forces, (of which he gives a correct description,) it was 4 o'clock. The retreat commenced in Centreville at half-past four. During this half hour he went about one mile down the Warrenton road, and there met the teams returning, with some straggling soldiers and one reserve regiment, which were not in the fight. He did not wait to see the main portion of the army, which did not reach Centreville until about two hours after *his* flight.

His excuse for hurrying to Washington on account of mailing his letter that night, is inconsis-

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tent with his statement that he went to bed, and that the mail did not leave until 4 o'clock the next morning.

He probably *dreamed* of the statements which he furnishes the *Times*, that there were no batteries taken—no charges made; that the Union forces lost five batteries, 8,000 stand of arms, &c., &c., and no doubt reflected his own feelings when he calls the Union forces *cowardly* at being repulsed after marching twelve miles and fighting three or four hours an entrenched enemy which numbered more than three to one. W. E. H.*

To the Editor of the Journal:

At last we have it. After two Atlantic voyages it is "salt" enough, all must admit, and more than that, we must admit that, *what he saw* of the affair at Bull Run he has described with graphic and painful truth.

But, as your correspondent, W. E. H., who knew more of his personal movements than I did, says, "He was at no time within three miles of the battle-field," and consequently was no better informed upon the subject than you were, Mr. Editor, sitting in your sanctum. Therefore the earlier struggles of the day—the hard won successes of the Union troops—receive but passing notice, because *he did not see them*—he only saw the rout.

Yet in another letter, from which I have only seen extracts, he arrives at various conclusions, "from further information acquired." One is that "there was not a charge of any kind made by the confederate cavalry upon any regiment of the enemy until they broke." If this be true, the Fire Zouaves are all liars, and thousands of spectators were deceived, including Major Barry, of the artillery, who states expressly in his report that the cavalry charged upon the Fire Zouaves.

Mr Russell says, "there were no masked batteries at play on the side of the Confederates." Either he was grossly misinformed, or he purposely distorts the truth by quibbling on the word *masked.* If a *masked battery* is absolutely one concealed by carefully constructed abatis, or elaborate mantelets, such as Mr. Russell has perhaps seen in India or the Crimea, and nothing else, then it is very possible there were none upon the field; but if it is a battery of siege or light artillery, with or without entrenchments, so placed that it is entirely concealed by woods, underbrush, or artificial screens until the attacking force is close upon it, then I am one of thousands who can bear witness to the existence of several such upon the hill east of our (Rhode Island) field of action. I did not *see* either fortifications or cannon; but when a puff of smoke is seen to issue from a piece of woods, followed by a heavy report and a heavier ball—when this goes on for hours, the missiles ploughing up the earth in every direction, and sowing it broadcast with the dead, one is likely to conclude that there is *something* behind that screen of trees, and *that something* is my idea of a masked battery.

Finally, he says, "There were no desperate struggles except by those who wanted to get away."

Of course not. He did not see them, and he is too truthful to relate any thing he did not see.

His account of the retreat is no worse than the truth—*what he saw of it.* But be it remembered that he was with the very advance of the flying column, the most panic-stricken portion of the crowd—that he was in Washington at 11 P. M. of Sunday, about the hour when our regiments and many others camped in the vicinity of Centreville, having regained our quarters, were lighting fires, drying our clothes, or talking over the prospect of a renewed attack on Manassas next day. Many of us lay down to sleep, from which we woke, more astonished than Mr. Russell himself, at the idea of continuing our retreat to Washington; but the order came from head-quarters, and we obeyed. Of this, or of the good order preserved by several regiments, including ours, all the way from the battle-field to Cub Run, and again resumed after three or four miles, Mr. Russell says nothing—he *did not see it*—he wasn't there.

Yet his story will be received as *Times*' gospel, not to be gainsayed, by hundreds of thousands in England, while the contradiction, if it ever reaches there, will come as a stale American apology, unworthy of belief. De W.*

---

* Mr. William E. Hamlin, of Providence, R. I.

* Winthrop De Wolf.

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